After looking at your subject through the academic lens of scholarly inquiry, it’s time to convince Mr. Peters that you’ve done great research by completing some persuasive writing.

**Role**: You as an expert on your topic

**Audience**: Mr. Lee Peters, principal of Legacy High School

**Format:** A friendly letter of persuasion

**Topic:** Convince Mr. Peters to create a day during the school year to honor and celebrate your Q3 inquiry topic. It is up to you how you’d like for your subject to be honored, so be thoughtful and creative

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| --- | --- |
| **Possible objections Mr. Peters might have about honoring your subject** | **Possible objections other people in our school community (parents, business owners, teachers, other students, etc.) might have about honoring your subject** |
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What would be an appropriate celebration to honor your subject? An all-school assembly? A holiday? A declaration that everyone wear a certain color? Brainstorm several possibilities here:

What would be a good date for this celebration? Why?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Logical Appeals = valid reasons + EVIDENCE (academic research—facts, statistics, examples, expert opinion)** | **Emotional Appeals = appeals to help your reader become personally involved in the argument by appealing to her or his feelings:**  **Physiological needs such as food, drink, and shelter**  **Psychological needs such as the need to be loved or be attractive, accepted, or successful**  **Emotions such as love, hate, guilt, loyalty, pride, self-esteem, patriotism, etc.** |
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**Form an opinion statement:** After reviewing the information above, write one sentence that expresses an opinion about the topic. You may need to write several versions of this statement before it says exactly what you want it to say. Use the following formula:

A specific topic + your feeling about it = an effective claim

**Introductions**

Introductions have one primary purpose: You must convince Mr. Peters that your topic is important enough to have some sort of celebration or recognition by the whole school and that your letter deserves his attention. This is best done by using an interesting hook to get your reader’s attention. Use a quotation, an anecdote, vivid imagery, or a startling fact or statistic. Give a bit of background information about your topic, and then finish with a **claim** (your thesis statement) that states the main idea of your letter and clearly expresses your opinion.

A thesis statement that is the last sentence of your introductory paragraph—this tells your reader what to expect and is your **claim**. It is a restricted, precisely worded declarative sentence that states the purpose of your letter—the point you are making.

**Body—Evidence to prove your claim**

Your persuasive letter should include three body paragraphs that will introduce your reader to evidence that is directly connected to your topic (see above). Make sure you use logical appeals and emotional appeals.

Start each body paragraph with a topic sentence. Each paragraph should give the reader a different reason to agree with your position. Provide evidence to support your opinions: facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, direct quotes, and expert opinions.

**Note**: One of your body paragraphs (you need to make a decision about where this paragraph best fits) should address objections someone might make towards your opinion. Tell the reader why their possible objection will not be a problem. For example: *Some people say [possible objection], but the fact is [your response to the objection].* ***Some people say that nuclear energy is dangerous, but statistics show that it is actually very safe.***

Make sure to provide legitimate reasons for your case. People like to hear the reasoning behind suggestions and the more reasons you can provide, the better chance you will have at swaying your reader's opinion. However, you need to make sure that they are legitimate reasons that are relevant to the topic of your letter.

**Organize** the details you have gathered by using a combination of the following approaches:  
  
LOGIC: Consider the following approaches:  
  
Analogy - a situation familiar to the reader is compared with one the writer wants to focus on (example: we celebrate and recognize MLK, Jr.’s birthday and the birthdays of Presidents Washington and Lincoln with a national holiday—isn’t your research subject as important?)  
  
Cause-and-effect relationships - one event is proven to be the cause of another  
  
Facts, example, and illustrations - used to support or explain a given situation or idea  
  
Judgments or opinions - used to support ideas that cannot be proven

CREDIBILITY: You can achieve credibility by:  
  
Avoiding illogical thinking  
  
Using only subtle emotional appeal  
  
Showing a clear understanding of the topic  
  
You also need to consider whether you will present your points in order of most important to least important or least important to most important.  
  
When deciding, consider these questions:  
  
What benefit will result from my reader considering my most powerful argument first? Last?  
  
What negative effect might result?  
  
How can I best get and keep the attention of my reader?

While introductions and conclusions sometimes start or finish with quotations for effect, **do not begin or end a body paragraph with a quotation**. A body paragraph must begin with a topic sentence that makes a claim before providing context, the quoted text, and commentary.

When using quotations as evidence, remember “CCQC”:

Claim, Context, Quotation, Commentary

Make sure that before or after each quote that you point out how it connects to the claim (thesis statement). Do this with variety and finesse rather than mentioning the word “thesis” or writing, “This proves my point.”)

**Conclusion**

The conclusion of a persuasive letter has two purposes: First, you must prove to your reader that you have considered the perspective of people who are likely to disagree with you. Start by mentioning the biggest concern that an opponent is likely to have and then either (a) showing why this concern is flawed or (b) explaining why your research subject should be celebrated despite that concern. Finally, your conclusion must be motivating and memorable. Appealing to a sense of right and wrong, describing the positive outcomes of celebrating your subject, and/or the negative outcomes of a refusal to act are all strategies that can leave your reader inspired to take action.

Make sure your conclusion restates your claim (thesis statement) in different words. Do not introduce a new topic in your conclusion. End with a call to action to request the reader’s help with what you want to do.

Conclude with "your way" being the "only way" to see things. At the end of your persuasive letter, it's important to represent your view as the best way of seeing the situation and leave no room for doubt. This will leave your reader with a strong sense of urgency to share your opinion.  
**Notes:**

As you develop your letter, be sure to use two or three persuasive techniques!  
  
**Repetition**—this is the repeating of a word or phrase (E: "I have a dream that…" This phrase is used several times throughout Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.)  
  
**Parallelism**—this is the repeating of phrases or sentences that are similar (parallel) in meaning and structure (Ex: "…of the people, by the people, for the people.") It might also be the repeating of a word or phrase (Ex: "I have a dream that…" This phrase is used several times throughout Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.)

**Storytelling**—this is a catch-all technique that helps your reader persuade him or herself to do what you want him or her to do.

**Consistency**—this is a valued social trait that is associated with integrity and rational behavior. Use this in your writing by getting the reader to agree with something up front that most people would have a hard time disagreeing with. Then rigorously make your case, with plenty of supporting evidence, all while relating your ultimate point back to the opening scenario that’s already been accepted.

**Social Proof**—this is what happens when people look for guidance from others as to what to do and what to accept. It is one of the most powerful psychological forces in our lives. It can determine whether we deliver aid to a person in need, and it can determine whether we muster the courage to stand up to a bully. Obvious examples of social proof can be found in testimonials and outside referrals, and it’s the driving force behind social media. You can also casually integrate elements of social proof in your writing, ranging from skillful alignment with outside authorities (your research) to blatant name dropping (Albert Einstein says….).

Ten Timeless Persuasive Writing Techniques

Want to convince your readers to do something or agree with your point of view?

OK, that was a silly question. Of course you do.

Persuasion is generally an exercise in creating a win-win situation. You present a case that others find beneficial to agree with. You make them an offer they can’t refuse, but not in the manipulative *Godfather* sense.

It’s simply a good deal or a position that makes sense to that particular person.

But there *are* techniques that can make your job easier and your case more compelling. While this list is in no way comprehensive, these 10 strategies are used quite a bit because they work.

**Repetition**

Talk to anyone well versed in [learning psychology](http://www.copyblogger.com/a-simple-four-step-strategy-for-developing-content-that-connects/), and they’ll tell you repetition is crucial. It’s also critical in persuasive writing, since a person can’t agree with you if they don’t truly get what you’re saying.

Of course, there’s good repetition and bad. To stay on the good side, make your point in several different ways, such as directly, using an example, in a story, via a quote from a famous person, and once more in your summary.

**Reasons Why**

Remember the power of the word [because](http://www.copyblogger.com/the-two-most-important-words-in-blogging/). Psychological studies have shown that people are more likely to comply with a request if you simply give them a *reason why*… even if that reason [makes no sense](http://www.copyblogger.com/the-two-most-important-words-in-blogging/).

The strategy itself does make sense if you think about it. We don’t like to be told things or asked to take action without a reasonable explanation. When you need people to be receptive to your line of thinking, always give reasons why.

**Comparisons**

[Metaphors, similes and analogies](http://www.copyblogger.com/metaphor-simile-and-analogy-what%e2%80%99s-the-difference/) are the persuasive writer’s best friends. When you can relate your scenario to something that the reader already accepts as true, you’re well on your way to convincing someone to see things your way.

But comparisons work in other ways too. Sometimes you can be more persuasive by comparing apples to oranges (to use a tired but effective metaphor). Don’t compare the price of your home study course to the price of a similar course—compare it to the price of a live seminar or your hourly consulting rate.

**Agitate and Solve**

This is a persuasion theme that works as an overall approach to making your case. First, you identify the problem and qualify your audience. Then you agitate the reader’s pain before offering your solution as the answer that will make it all better.

The agitation phase is not about being sadistic; it’s about [empathy](http://www.copyblogger.com/copywriting-success/). You want the reader to know unequivocally that you understand his problem because you’ve dealt with it and/or are experienced at eliminating it. The credibility of your solution goes way up if you demonstrate that you truly feel the prospect’s pain.

**Prognosticate**

Another persuasion theme involves providing your readers with a glimpse into the future. If you can convincingly present an extrapolation of current events into likely future outcomes, you may as well have a license to print money.

This entire strategy is built on credibility. If you have [no idea what you’re talking about](http://www.seomoz.org/blog/i-used-to-respect-robert-scobles-opinion), you’ll end up looking foolish. But if you can back up your claims with your credentials or your obvious grasp of the subject matter, this is an extremely persuasive technique.

**Go Tribal**

Despite our attempts to be sophisticated, evolved beings, we humans are exclusionary by nature. Give someone a chance to be a part of a group that they want to be in—whether that be wealthy, or hip, or green, or even contrarian—and they’ll hop on board whatever train you’re driving.

This is the technique used in the [greatest sales letter ever written](http://www.copyblogger.com/the-greatest-sales-letter-of-all-time/). Find out what group people want to be in, and offer them an invitation to join while seemingly excluding others.

**Address Objections**

If you present your case and someone is left thinking “yeah, but…”, well, you’ve lost. This is why direct marketers use long copy—it’s not that they want you to read it all, it’s that they want you to read enough until you buy.

Addressing all the potential objections of at least the majority of your readers can be tough, but if you really know your subject the arguments against you should be fairly obvious. If you think there are no reasonable objections to your position, you’re in for a shock if you have comments enabled.